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ECCLESIASTICAL GALLANTRY:

OR,

THE MYSTERY UNRAVELLED,

A TALE.

DEDICATED TO HIS GRACE

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

WITHOUT PERMISSION.

Omnia vincit amor et nos cedamus amori. VIRGIL.

LONDON:
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M DCC LXXVIII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO HIS GRACE

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

MY LORD,

IT is with extreme diffidence, that I preſume to place the following Ballad under the Patronage of your Grace. You have taken an intereſt in the Conteſt which has given riſe to it; and on ſuch motives as deſerve to be recorded and applauded.

I ſhall not addreſs you in the ordinary ſtile of Dedications. Your Grace's name muſt be known to Poſterity, for reaſons very different from thoſe which have immortaliſed the Patrons of Learning, Merit, or Virtue. All your own knowledge is by *Intuition*;

Intuition; and all your accompliſhments are ſuch as Nature and your Nurſe ſtamped immediately on your mind. This is conceived to be the Angelic State, where ſuperior ſpirits forego the pains of inveſtigation, and eternally remain in a kind of ſpiritual and exalted Childhood. Hence, my Lord, *your* unacquaintance with the common attainments of profeſſional Pedants; and hence *your* invariable neglect and hatred of all who have the preſumption to ſeek preferment, or even a livelihood, under the claims of merit.

The Eccleſiaſtical State of the Pariſh of St. Ann, Weſtminſter, hath attracted the watchful and paſtoral eye of your Grace. Men, of ordinary minds, in your ſituation, would have enquired into the ſeparate claims of the Diſputants; and weak natures might have relented at the thought of ſinking in the perſon and fate of the Curate, a reſpectable and *ſacred* order of men, into the condition of menial ſervants, at the will and caprice of deſpotic

maſters

maſters. But Inveſtigation is not your Talent; nor Pity your Weakneſs. Your *great* mind perceived, *intuitively*, that the whole Fabric of Eccleſiaſtical Policy might be endangered by emancipating the * *Helotes of the Altar*; you therefore proceeded on the great principle which has hitherto ſupported the Dignity of the Prieſthood, to ſacrifice the million to the fortunate and choſen few.

Great Events often flow from little Cauſes; but theſe Cauſes are objects of contemplation to *philoſophical*, not often to *eccleſiaſtical* minds. The Reformation is among the moſt important events of Engliſh Hiſtory; it changed the whole face of this Country, and laid the foundation of its Greatneſs.—We are aſtoniſhed to trace this fruitful ſource of our Riches and Glory—

* The moſt wretched of all ſlaves under the tyranny of the Lacedemonians.

this

this object of our Adoration—into the ſimple deſire of Henry the Eighth, *to go to bed to Anna Boleyne.*

The Ballad which I now *humbly* dedicate to your Grace, will have the ſame effect in exhibiting a Cauſe, which in ſpeculation, may be deemed inadequate to its effects. Weſtminſter-Hall and Doctors-Commons have, for many years, been the ſcenes of bittereſt contention between the Rector and Curate of St. Ann. The People, under the conduct of *Reaſon*, have taken one part—and Prieſts, under the conduct of your *Grace*, have taken another.—*Reaſon* rewards her votary with ſelf-ſatisfaction;—with the bleſſings of the oppreſſed,—and with extenſive fame,—but bids him be content on a ſpare and temperate diet.—*You*, my Lord, guided by a principle above *Reaſon*, cover the ſins and ſhame of your brother with the ſpangled Inſignia of Preferment, and ſooth the torments of diſappointed malignity with the plenteous means of *Holy Intemperance*. Thoſe who have viewed ſuch

Effects

Effects with Curiosity may likewise be surprized in tracing them all to a *Woman*.

This is the Design of the following Ballad, which I have no doubt will be transmitted to Posterity, under the sanction of your Grace's name.

I have the honor to be, with the most perfect Conviction of your Eminence, Worth, and Piety,

MY LORD,

Your GRACE's most *humble*

and most *devoted* Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

II.

THE MYSTERY UNRAVELLED *,

A TALE.

I.

TWO Pious Priests, in am'rous mood,
Their little ſchemes of love purſued,
As other Priests have done!
One Nymph more favour'd than the reſt,
Theſe Reverend Saints by turns careſs'd,
Like Philpot and his Son †.

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* The virulence and hatred with which the Rector of St. Ann hath perſecuted his Curate, having never been accounted for by any probable Reaſon; the explanation given in this little piece, is very properly entitled the Mystery Unravelled.

† A ſcene in the Citizen exactly ſimilar to that which is here deſcribed.

II.

Like them prepar'd for am'rous fight,
They ſallied forth one luckleſs night,
To woo this courteous dame;
The RECTOR firſt approach'd the fair,
And gravely ſpoke his buſineſs there;
Rap! rap! the CURATE came.

III.

Old Square-toes ſlyly ſtole away,
And, underneath the toilet lay,
Curſing his wayward fate;
From thence he peep'd with curious eye
The bold Intruder to eſpie,
Who ſought the lovely KATE.

Shame

IV.

Shame firſt his jealous rage withheld
And kept him ſilent and conceal'd,
While each fond vow he heard,
The quick drawn ſigh,---th' extatic kiſs,
Soft preludes to the act of bliſs,
The act which moſt he fear'd.

V.

In ſpight of GRACE, in ſpight of LAW,
His hand,---his buſy hand he ſaw,
Her heaving boſom preſs;
But when he dared,---ye Powers above!
To ſeize the SACRED *Mount of Love!*
And all her charms poſſeſs!

Hold,

VI.

Hold, hold, exclaim'd th' enrag'd Divine!
Deſcend! deſcend! the PULPIT's mine*,
And raved 'till he was hoarſe;
Heedleſs of this ill-tim'd injunction,
The Curate, zealous in his FUNCTION,
Went on with his DISCOURSE.

---

* The figure which, for the ſake of decency, is uſed in the deſcription of this incident, deſcribes literally a circumſtance which happened before a numerous Congregation, in the pariſh church of St. A---, to which *both* theſe Gentlemen *very lately* belonged.

Like

VII.

Like Bear bereaved, the Doctor ſwore,
He beat his breaſt,---his band he tore.
The Curate's dog attended,
He bark'd and grinn'd the toilet round
And kept his Rev'rence ſafe in Pound
Until the Sermon ended.

VIII.

Young Spintext then obſequious came,
Call'd off his dog, diſmiſs'd the Dame,
And ſaid,---in caſe of Duty,
You'll find, dear Doctor, your Inferior,
Will humbly yield to his Superior,
With all the rev'rence due t'ye.

But

IX.

But " when a Lady's in the caſe,"
Say what you will of SPECIAL GRACE,
Soft Nature will prevail;
RECTORS and CURATES,---BISHOPS,---DEANS,
Alike expoſed to Lover's pains,
Will like mere men be frail.

X.

Forth from his covert ruſh'd the SAINT,
(Would HOGARTH lived the ſcene to paint,
It ſuited Hogarth's pen.)
With caſſock looſe and wig awry,
Fierce Anger darting from his eye,
And madneſs in his mein.

Hence

XI.

Hence from my preſence graceleſs Rake,
Nor feign my Purpoſe to miſtake,
A Purpoſe kind to thee;
I came thy conduct to reprove,
By nothing mov'd but Holy Love,
And Christian Charity.

XII.

Inſult to inj'ry though you add,
More than would make a Stoic mad,
Or ſet e'en Job on fire;
Vengeance my generous heart rejects,
But ſuch as Holy Church directs,
And Holy Men require.

XIII.

Thy drinking,---wenching ſhall be known.---
To ſtrip thy SACERDOTAL gown
I'll raiſe the Commons's fury;
For though you prove you ne'er was drunk
And I like you have had my Punk,
That Court admits no JURY.

XIV.

Its ancient Laws, its wiſe Decrees,
Are all enforc'd by dint of FEES,
Which keep in awe the Rabble,
Which make the poor per-force obey,
And SAUCY CURATES rue the day,
That they with RECTORS ſquabble.

No

XV.

No Court EPISCOPAL will hear,
However juſt, a CURATE's Pray'r,
A Rector to oppoſe *;
Tyrant's themſelves,---they Tyrants back;---
Hence their ſupport I ne'er ſhall lack,
To cruſh INFERIOR foes.

XVI.

He ſaid,---and having ſmooth'd his band,---
His wig compos'd,---with hat in hand,---
His BEAVER HAT and ROSE,
In ſullen pomp he walk'd away
But neither bade the Fair good-b'ye,
Nor wiſh'd her ſound repoſe.

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* The truth of this charge was indiſputably clear in the hearing of certain Articles exhibited by the Curate of St. Ann, Weſtminſter, againſt the late Rector, Dr. H--d.

The

XVII.

The Sequel of this Comic Tale,
The Muſe hereafter will reveal,
When each hath ſtood the teſt,
When GOODY BETTESWORTH ſhall declare
Which was moſt FREQUENT in his PRAYER,
And which PERFORM'D the beſt *.

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* The Peccadillo's of the Reverend ſubjects of this Ballad are now before the Judge of the Eccleſiaſtical Court, and the proceedings, when finiſhed, will be made public, for the amuſement and information of thoſe who are unacquainted with Eccleſiaſtical Myſteries.

FINIS.